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Hashimite depictions of Wahhabi Islam as a rhetorical front in the late Ottoman period

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ABSTRACT

This article frames the late-Ottoman Hashimite-Saᶜudi rivalry in the Arabian Peninsula as an ideological struggle in terms of competing notions of Islamic modernity and civilisation. I analyse how the Hashimite dynasty in Mecca leveraged Ottoman-era ideas of Islamic civilisation against Al-Saᶜud during the late Ottoman period and into the 1916–1918 Revolt. Hashimite figures like Husayn and his sons portrayed Wahhabism as antithetical to modern Islamic civilisation to critique the Saᶜudi family and their allies. They characterised Wahhabism as extreme with its adherents composed of nomadic populations whose fanaticism set them apart from settled, moderate, and 'civilised' societies. These distortions reflected a rhetorical front within a global debate over Islamic civilisation that the Hashimites intended to centre themselves as leaders. However, there existed different models of Islamic civilisation, particularly ones in which tribesmen of the Arabian Peninsula were its key agents. Ultimately, these alternative models weakened Hashimite claims that they represented the exclusive civilising force in the Arabian Peninsula and perhaps strengthened the appeal of other Arab leaders like the Saᶜudis.

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Introduction

In this article I analyse the attitude of several members of the Hashimite dynasty towards Wahhabism, a socio-religious reform movement that their rivals in the Arabian Peninsula, the Saᶜudis, had adopted. I situate their discourse within a global, late-19th century debate of the role played by nomadic tribes in modern Islamic civilisation. The Hashimites, a notable Meccan family who were recognized as descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, had governed the Hijaz province in the name of the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph as the Amirs of Mecca for nearly four centuries (Teitelbaum, 2001). In the midst of World War I (1914–1918) after having secured a British promise to support their leadership over an independent Arab state, the Hashimite Amir of Mecca Husayn ibn 'Ali and his sons launched a revolt in June 1916. They did so after becoming increasingly disillusioned with the Ottoman government following the 1908 Revolution and after embracing a form of Arabism–an ideology that called for Arab political and social preeminence (Dawn, 1973; Kayalı, 1997; Teitelbaum, 2001). Amidst waging a revolt against the Ottomans, Husayn also contended against a rising Arab rival, ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Al Saᶜud (or 'Ibn Saᶜud') in the Najd region of Central Arabia. Ibn Saᶜud had also cultivated a diplomatic relationship with the British and was poised to stymie Hashimite ambitions in the region. To confront the Saᶜudi challenge, Husayn leveraged his leadership of the Arab Revolt to promote himself as the de facto representative of the Arab nation through proclamations and propaganda (Jong, 1980; Teitelbaum, 2001). As the overseer of Mecca, he even weaponized the yearly pilgrimage by blocking Ibn Saᶜud's supporters from the holy city (Susser & Aryeh, 1995; Teitelbaum, 2001).

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Alongside these strategies, the Hashimites critiqued Wahhabi Islam that the Saᶜudi family had adopted in the 18th century. The term 'Wahhabi' refers to the teachings of the itinerant preacher Muhammad ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhab (d. 1792) who founded a religious reform movement in the Najd region of central Arabia during his lifetime. He had called for a strict interpretation of the Quran and the *sunnah* in order to purge what he deemed unlawful innovations that threatened the absolute doctrine of God's oneness (Crawford, 2014). An alliance struck with Muhammad ibn Saᶜud in 1744 began a centuries-long process of state formation within central Arabia, which threatened the other powers in the region, including the Ottomans and Hashimites. In effect, Wahhabism bolstered Saᶜudi political aims in the region ideologically and practically (Alangari, 1998; Al-Rasheed, 2002; Commins, 2009a; Kostiner, 1993). By criticising Wahhabism, Husayn challenged Ibn Saᶜud's claim to political and religious legitimacy.

The Hashimite critique of Wahhabism, however, was not just another attempt to attack Ibn Saᶜud's reputation. As Rohan Davis noted in his study of Wahhabism, the doctrine does not 'have a standard or widely agreed upon conceptualization or definition,' and as such, '…is a contested category' open to interpretations and distortions (Davis, 2018, p. 4). As an 'observer-dependent phenomenon with no objective reality,' Wahhabism provided the Hashimites a malleable discursive field in which to frame their rivalry with the Saᶜudis (Davis, 2018, p. 25). Thus I argue that a front in the Hashimite competition against Ibn Saᶜud was ideological, first by outlining and connecting them to a Hamidian-era formulation of modern Islamic civilisation. This discourse valued urban society while disparaging non-settled, nomadic lifestyles as antithetical to civilisation by being extreme, fanatical, and outside an orthodox view of Islam that the Ottomans had cultivated as part of their statecraft. I then trace the perseverance and translation of this discourse by the Hashimites during their revolt against the Ottomans from 1916–1918. Then they portrayed themselves to their British allies as agents of modern Islamic civilisation and depicted Ibn Saᶜud through his promotion of Wahhabism as anti-modern and anti-civilising. Far from being merely reactive political figures as described in their historiography, the Hashimites were intellective inheritors and preservers of a late Ottoman discourse on Islamic civilisation. I conclude this paper speculating that a persistent obstacle of this Hashimite discursive strategy was the interplay of competing discourses of modernity: between one, championed by the Hashimites, that equated modern civilisation with urbanity and moderation, and another that looked towards the tribesmen of the Arabian Peninsula as an animating force that contained the potential to renew Islamic civilisation. The presence–or preference–of the latter ultimately revealed the rhetorical limits of Husayn's political and religious claims of authority and offers an explanation for the constant appeal of the Saᶜudis despite Hashimite efforts to undermine their reputation.

A note on sources is necessary. This paper necessarily focuses on the *private* portrayals of Wahhabism that the Hashimites expressed. During this period under examination, the Hashimites had to be strategically circumspect. Before the Revolt as examined later in this paper, the Ottoman government attempted to forge agreements with the Peninsular rivals, a policy that the Hashimites criticised but only privately. As scholars have noted, the Hashimites maintained a political pragmatism with the Ottoman government in the years preceding their Revolt (Kayalı, 1997). To be public about their critique would have threatened their standing. During the Revolt, the Hashimites assured their British–and Arabist–allies and sponsors that the other Arab Peninsular powers were uniting under their banner (Storrs, 1914). That claim of unifying the Arabs became a constant, public refrain for the Hashimites through the Revolt; to publicly critique Ibn Saᶜud would have undermined Husayn's political program. For this reason, their attitudes towards Wahhabism were only expressed privately for which the sources, in both English and Arabic, are few (Rudd, 1993).

The Hashimites as intellectual actors

To examine how the Hashimites applied the ideas of Islamic civilisation and modernity in their portrayal of Wahhabism, this article treats the Hashimites as actors affected by the late Ottoman ideological landscape. By this framing, it is meant to comment on previous scholarship that has fixated on Hashimite *realpolitik* when accounting for their political activities–whether their service with the Ottoman government (the 'Ottomanist' rubric), their interactions with Arabist parties in Cairo and Dasmascus, or the role of British colonial intrigues. Very little if any consideration has been made for Hashimite intellectual

precommitments as guiding their political ambitions. In fact, there generally has been a diminution. Mary Wilson had concluded that despite having spent most of their lives in Istanbul even socializing and marrying into Ottoman elite families, the Hashimites 'were not among the ambitious youth. Their future seemed to depend on lineage rather than on [educational] degree ….' (Mūsa, 1986, p. 76; Wilson, 1990, pp. 12–13). From this perspective, Hashimite political and social standing depended exclusively on their recognised descent from the Prophet Muhammad, their historic governance of Mecca, and Caliphal approval (Ochsenwald, 2016). In his study of how the 'Last Ottoman Generation' of Arab figures were shaped by a shared educational and training experience curated by the Ottoman government through schools, the bureaucracy, and the political culture, Michael Provence also excluded the Hashimites from this category because their standing and prominence rested on genealogy and not their training in the Ottoman system per se (Provence, 2017).[1]

The Hashimites nevertheless had emerged and benefited as Arab Ottoman elites within the complex matrix of modernising state policies and attitudes towards Islamic civilisation. Specifically, Husayn and his sons were shaped by a particular matrix of policies that had articulated and reified an Ottoman conception of Islamic civilisation that reinforced the rule of Caliph-Sultan Abdul Hamid II (r. 1876–1909) against any political or religious threats. Public performances like the Friday prayer, official iconography, and the codification of secular and religious laws were designed to assert the Sultan's political and religious legitimacy (Deringil, 2011). In terms of religious law, the Hamidian conception of modernity became increasingly connected with what scholars dubbed the 'Ottomanization' of *shari'a* whereby the state attempted to standardised religious practice by elevating the Hanafi *madhhab* as the official Ottoman Sunni school and by limiting any potential influences from outside Muslim groups which Abdul Hamid viewed with suspicion (Deringil, 2011, pp. 46–50). Regulations like the printing and importation of Qurans, restrictions on non-Ottoman Muslims purchasing land in the Hijaz, and even the construction of the Hijaz railway fit within this Hamidian schema (Deringil, 2011, pp. 57–63; Ochsenwald, 1980). The consequence of Hamidianism was a 'fine-tuning' of the population and the 'intellectual conditioning' of the elites, like the Hashimites, to associate Islamic civilisation and modernity with Hamidian values and authority. These values emphasised stability of the state through centralisation of authority, and the promotion and standardisation of religious practices that confirmed the Ottoman Sultan's claim to represent all Muslims as the universal Caliph.

These policies ultimately affected the late Ottoman intellectual landscape through a specific discourse about civilisation and progress. Fueled by the need to revitalise Ottoman society to confront 19th century exigencies, Ottoman intellectuals (both Turkish and Arab) equated modernity with urban society. Among Arab thinkers, for example, 'civilisation' (*tamaddun*) was equated with 'the social' and was juxtaposed to a state of barbarity (*hamajiyya*). These Arabist thinkers tended to define civilisation with 'morality of the urban dwellers' (*akhlaq ahl al-mudun*) who had progressed from a state of 'roughness or lack of refinement (*khushuna*) and ignorance to a state of sociability/friendly atmosphere (*uns*) and knowledge' (Khuri-Makdisi, 2014, pp. 264–265). While some of these thinkers could be described as more 'liberal' (emphasising limited government) and others as more 'conservative' (by valuing order), both sets of thinkers viewed reform as a totalizing project that included 'modernising religion and looking for ways to purge certain of its elements deemed incompatible with the present age's needs and realities' (Khuri-Makdisi, 2014, p. 263).[2] As a result, within Ottoman administrative and military schools, an 'Ottoman Orientalism' emerged that distinguished civilisation among communities based on their race or way of life (Makdisi, 2002). In this schema, the urbanised populations closest to the imperial centre, particularly the Turks, were deemed most civilised and modern. Those further away in terms of lifestyle, culture, and education, like Arab nomadic pastoralist groups, were deemed in need of civilisation. 'Tribal Schools' were thus established with the purpose of transforming the sons of Arab tribes into modern citizens (Rogan, 1996).

Alongside these symbolic and performative elements of the Ottoman modernisation project, an anti-Wahhabi discourse had emerged in the 19th century. Beginning with the expansion of the first Saᶜudi state in the mid-18th century, the Saᶜudi-Wahhabi alliance directly threatened the territorial integrity of the Ottoman empire by expanding throughout Central Arabia. The capture of Mecca and Medina in 1805 posed the greatest ideological challenge to the Ottoman Sultan's claim to be the universal Caliph of all Muslims and required refutation. From the Ottoman perspective, Wahhabism was considered

heretical and its adherents were labelled as 'al-Khawārij'–a label for an early Islamic group of separatist who had splintered from the original caliphal order (Commins, 2009a). With the restoration of Ottoman control of the holy cities in 1840, various Ottoman officials penned polemics against Wahhabism. For example, Ayyūb Ṣabrī Pasha (d.1890), published numerous works in Turkish condemning the Saᶜudis and Wahhabism while as an Ottoman naval officer in the Hijaz and Yemen.[3]

Perhaps more closely associated with the Hashimites was the 1878 anti-Wahhabi work *Fitna al-Wahābbiya* that the Mufti of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* in Mecca, Aḥmad b. Zaynī Daḥlān, wrote. Published in Arabic, Daḥlān described Wahhabism's emergence, its theological differences, and its history relative to the Ottoman Empire. The bulk of his writing fixated on defences derived from the Quran and the Sunnah of certain practices (like visiting tombs or seeking intercession from holy figures, *tawassul*) that Wahhabism considered '*bidᶜa*,' 'shirk,' or '*takfīr*' (Daḥlān, 1978, pp. 3–4). Daḥlān concluded that Wahhabism was a separate sect (*ta'if*) with its own juridical school because its followers believe that its founder, Abd al-Wahhab, was renewing Islam–a *mujaddid*–a term with roots to the idea of 'revival,' which was antithetical to the Ottoman modernising project (Daḥlān, 1978, p. 5). More polemically, he portrayed Wahhabism as a *fitna*–an Arabic term used to describe a rebellion or strife used to describe periods of political and theological turmoil (Cook, 2012).[4] Finally, according to Daḥlān, Wahhabis were among the 'al-Khawārij' not because they rejected the Ottoman caliphate, but because they wrongly labelled believers as unbelievers (Daḥlān, 1978, p. 7).

In his historical treatment, Daḥlān narrated the Wahhabi conquest of Mecca and Medina into two different phases which disclosed how he viewed them as a threat to civilisation. After having captured various tribes in the east, he described how the Wahhabis sent a 'group of their scholars (ulama)' to the holy cities in order to 'corrupt' their scholars there. However, the urban ulama of Mecca and Medina successfully refuted Wahhabi beliefs and discredited them. The Wahhabi forces then resorted to turning the nearby tribes against the Amir of Mecca to siege Mecca and Medina. Daḥlān then described that because of the fanaticism of the 'tribes' the inhabitants of Mecca faced severe hardship during the siege, resorting to eating dogs because food supplies had dwindled or became too expensive (Daḥlān, 1978, p. 13). Under Wahhabi occupation, Daḥlān chronicled how the Wahhabis plundered the Prophet Muhammad's tomb in Medina and then outlawed all activities that they deemed as innovative or takfīr, like visiting shrines or smoking tobacco (Daḥlān, 1978, p. 13). After praising the Egyptian forces of Muhammad Ali who reclaimed the region for the Ottomans and expelled the Wahhabis, Daḥlān comforted his reader by explaining that the Wahhabi heresy had not been unforeseen. Rather, prophetic *hadiths* had warned of the arrival of those who shaved their heads like the al-Khawārij, which he interpreted to mean the Wahhabis (Daḥlān, 1978, p. 19).

The Hashimite acceptance of this Hamidian framework and its persistent expression was evident in a letter Husayn wrote to his brother in 1913. Having been appointed to the Amirate of Mecca as one of Sultan Abdul Hamid's last administrative acts before being deposed in the Spring 1909, Husayn's tenure was marked by navigating the policies of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). The CUP came to power in the end of 19078 and had effectively taken control of the state until its dissolution. While the capital was trying to tighten its control over the Hijaz, a policy that threatened Husayn's authority there, the CUP attempte to formally recognize the provincial leadership of troublesome non-Ottoman Peninsular powers, like the al-Idrīsī and al-Saᶜud, in exchange for their loyalty to the Ottoman state (Bang, 1996; Çiçek, 2016; Çiçek, 2017; Kayalı, 1997; Rogan, 1996, 1999).[5] Within this context, Amir Husayn wrote a letter in 1913 to his brother, Nasir, describing his ideological objections to the CUP-led Ottoman government. This short letter, while focused on the CUP, nonetheless revealed his understanding of Islamic civilisation and modernity that he applied against his regional and religious rivals. Husayn largely decried the actions of the government, which he characterised as a threat to the Muslim unity that rested in the Caliphate to whom the Amirate of Mecca and thus his Hashimite ancestors had submitted. The current government threatened that unity by 'surrendering to al-Idrīsī, who follows the Italians and are under their influence, and to establish him [al-Idrīsī] as a ruler over us.' Husayn immediately followed with the short comparison that 'Ibn Saud is the same.' According to Husayn, he credited the Arabs (never specifically named) as forming a majority of the Sultan's '*Shura* ['advisory'] Council,' the people of the Hijaz, and his dynasty for advancing Islamic unity by remaining loyal to the Caliphate (Mūsa, 1973, pp. 9–10).

Husayn's characterization of this political moment hinted at his persistent understanding of the characteristics of Islamic civilisation as defined by a Hamidian rubric. Husayn's insistence on Muslim unity through loyalty to the Caliph mirrored forms of civilisation that valued order and security and reflected the schema of modernity promoted during the Hamidian period. Husayn's modernity conceived of civilisation as being stable, ordered, and severely hierarchical with the Sultan-Caliph at its apex and power descending to his loyal supporters. According to Husayn, the unique and historical relationship that existed between the Amirate of Mecca and the Ottoman Caliphate testified to his ongoing loyalty to the Sultan-Caliph. Husayn associated the Arabs in general to this loyalty based on his reference to forming a majority of the Sultan's *advisory* council (Akarli, 1986).

In addition, according to Husayn, any doctrine or group that did not exist within this Hamidian framework threatened Islamic civilisation. Thus, to equate Ibn Saᶜud with the Idrīsīds disclosed Husayn's opinion of Wahhabism–albeit implicitly. The Idrīsīds referred to a tribal confederation led by Muhammad al-Idrīsī who in 1906 established a contested state south of the Hijaz. He claimed religious legitimacy through the eponymous revivalist sect founded by his Moroccan ancestor Ahmad ibn Idrīs in the late 18th and early 19th centuries that had settled in 'Asir along the Red Sea. Since Muhammad al-Idrīsī based his legitimacy in this revivalist movement he naturally set his movement in opposition to the Ottoman caliphal order by calling for religious reform with his followers declaring him their 'imam' (Bang, 1996, pp. 87–88). The Hashimites eventually participated directly in the war against the Idrīsīds when Husayn sent his son Faysal to challenge the Idrīsīds in Qunfudah in 1910. The Idrīsīds were contained, but the conflict was never resolved, and even became enmeshed in the 1911–1912 Ottoman-Italian war when al-Idrīsī declared an alliance with the Italians who sent him arms and supplies. It was in the spring of 1913 when the Ottomans finally sent a delegation to negotiate with al-Idrīsī to recognize his authority in ᶜAsir in exchange for his recognition of Ottoman political sovereignty (Bang, 1996, pp. 102–103). Although ultimately not successful, it was the government's attempt at mutual recognition that prompted Husayn's letter. For Husayn to characterise Ibn Saᶜud as another al-Idrīsī revealed the extent in which his ideas of civilisation and modernity, shaped by his experience under the Hamidian order, affected his interpretation of his rivals. In the case of the Wahhabis, he clearly considered them outside the 'orthodox' Sunni world, an alternative community that rejected the Ottoman Caliphate (Al-Rasheed, 2015; Crawford, 2014; Commins, 2015).[6]

Articulating a Hashimite Islamic civilisation

With increased tensions with the CUP and then the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the Ottomans and the British became enemy combatants. This political reality opened a new source of political and financial enrichment for the Hashimites. At first, the Hashimites widened their interactions with Arabist parties in Cairo and Damascus (Allawi, 2014; Dawn, 1973; Tauber, 1989). In 1914, Abdullah ibn Husayn even met with Lord Kitchener, the British Agent in Cairo, about a possible alliance between Great Britain and his father. Once the Ottomans formally entered World War I, Husayn then corresponded with Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt about launching a revolt in exchange for British recognition while also attempting to negotiate with figures of the CUP to secure his privileges as the Amir of Mecca (Kayalı, 1997, pp. 190–92). After Husayn secured a British pledge of support for his independence over an enlarged Arab territory, he waited until June 1916 to launch the Revolt against the Ottoman state. The Revolt offered Husayn a platform from which to promote himself as an Arab national leader, which threatened Saᶜudi interests.

Regarding their rivalry with the Saᶜudis, the Hashimites downplayed any tensions during the war years. This strategy was most present in their newspaper *Al-Qibla* which the Hashimites published in Mecca from 1916–1925 as their official mouthpiece. For example, prior to August 1918, there are only two references to the Saᶜudis. The first, in October 1916, merely reports that 'the men of Ibn Saᶜud raided all the camels which the Unionists in Iraq and Syria had purchased' (*Al-Qibla*, 1916). The second, nearly a year later, reported that Amir Muhammad ibn Saᶜud, the father of ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz, visited Mecca to perform the yearly pilgrimage (*Al-Qibla*, 1917). These brief reports indicated that the focus of *Al-Qibla* was to be on the Hashimites exclusively, unless a report could collaborate their claims to represent the Arabs. *Al-Qibla*'s tone, however, only began to shift in August 1918 when it published an article

condemning Khalid ibn Mansur ibn Luw'ayy of the al-Khurma oasis (*Al-Qibla*, 1918). A region between the Hijaz and the Najd, al-Khurma had become an actively contested territory in the summer months of 1918 as key tribes had embraced Wahhabism and thus fell under the sway of Ibn Saᶜud (Kostiner, 1993; Susser & Aryeh, 1995). In response, Husayn sent a small force against Saᶜudi allies in al-Khurma in order to reclaim the region but was repelled. This defeat shocked Husayn and may have affected his mental state (Teitelbaum, 2001, p. 255). It also prompted Husayn to prohibit Wahhabis and other supporters of Ibn Saᶜud from the 1918 pilgrimage. Nevertheless, in accordance with the Hashimite strategy to avoid publicly criticising Ibn Saᶜud, *Al-Qibla* never mentioned Wahhabism as a factor in their conflict with ibn Luw'ayy until after the war with the Ottomans ended (*Al-Qibla*, 1918).

This early conflict over al-Khurma revealed the façade of Arab unity under the Hashimites, which they had to address–still in private–to the tribesmen in al-Khurma and ultimately with their British allies who feared an intra-Arab conflict. To defend against the Saᶜudis, the Hashimites rearticulated a modified critique of Wahhabism that mirrored the ideas they inherited during the Hamidian period except with an important adaptation: since they were fighting the Ottoman caliphate, they could not emphasise loyalty to the caliphate as a condition of Islamic civilisation. Likewise, they could not criticise the tribes, since the tribes were the recipients of their threats. Instead, they condemned Wahhabism on religious grounds. For example, in a letter from Husayns' son Abdullah to Jabr ibn Abdullah, the leader of Subay' tribe in al-Khurma, he condemned the tribes' embrace of Wahhabism as an act of apostasy. In the opening lines of his letter dated 28 September 1917, Abdullah reported that he had heard that the Subay' had 'renounced the religion of Muhammad *al-Muṣṭafā*' by embracing the new Wahhabi *madhhab* (Ibn Husayn, 1917). In both religious and political language, he explained that the matter concerns his family because the 'Subay' are [Husayn's] flock and all flocks are the responsibility of its shepherd.' Yet, he ominously ended his letter with a veiled threat:

> As for those who have become Wahhabi…it has become a severe obstacle for them. If they do not repent and return, and if a month and a half pass and you do not comply with my message, and you do not submit to us and act on all that you are commanded, do not blame me for what will happen to your lands, villages, and palms. Peace be upon those who follow the right way [*al-hudā*] (Ibn Husayn, 1917).

In other words, Abdullah accused those who had embraced Wahhabism as heretics whose lives and properties could no longer be protected since they had left Islam. In line with Husayn's strategy of minimising any intra-Arab divisions, however, 'Abdullah never mentioned Ibn Saᶜud. Despite Husayn's and his sons' efforts to maintain an image of Arab unity publicly, British observers in the region recognized a growing animosity between the Hashimites and Saᶜudis. In response, in December 1917 three British officers met with Husayn's sons Abdullah and Faysal in separate meetings to determine the nature of Hashimite opinion of Ibn Saᶜud. Cols. Gilbert Clayton and Cyril Wilson met with Abdullah, and Col. T.E. Lawrence met with Faysal. These interviews took place in the context of the British knowledge of the rising tensions in al-Khurma and Hashimite awareness that the British were actively meeting and negotiating with the Saᶜudis to take action against Ottoman Arab allies, the Rashidis in Jabal Shammar. For these British officials, they intended to gauge Hashimite attitudes of all these developments that had placed the British in a precarious position between their two Arab allies and may threaten British interests in the Hijaz and broader Muslim and Arab worlds.

During these meetings, Abdullah and Faysal critiqued Ibn Saᶜud by directly contrasting Wahhabism to Islamic civilisation and modernity. Guiding their depictions was the idea earlier that Wahhabism represented a religious revivalist movement with Ibn Saᶜud as its spiritual leader (Al-Rasheed, 2002; Karpat, 2001; Niblock, 1982).[7] (The original Arabic was not provided, but it is reasonable given the context that they would have used the term *tajdīd* to describe the movement and its related form, *mujaddid* or 'renewer,' terms used by Daḥlān in his anti-Wahhabi polemic.) Faysal, interviewed by Col. T.E. Lawrence for the *Arab Bulletin*, provided the first discussion of Wahhabism as a religious revivalist movement by defending his brother's wartime fixation on Ibn Saᶜud (Arab Bulletin No. 74, 1917). He explained that 'it is not fair to condemn my brother, Abdullah, without reserve. He is taking no part in the war against the Turks, because his whole heart, his head, and all his resources are engaged in the problems of Najd' (Arab Bulletin No. 74, 1917). According to Faysal, his brother's actions were a continuation of his 1910 conflict against Ibn Saᶜud, thereby suggesting a political genealogy for the Hashimite-Saᶜudi rivalry that

had not yet been resolved. Now that the war against the Ottomans had allowed the Hashimites to expand their authority to other parts of the Hijaz, 'al-Saud took alarm' and 'once more he has sent out all his missionaries,' against the Hashimites (Arab Bulletin No. 74, 1917). In effect, Faysal claimed that the Saᶜudis initiated a religious conflict by sending missionaries.

Abdullah made a similar set of claims in his interview with Colonels Wilson and Clayton. Like his brother, he traced the recent subversive activities of Ibn Saᶜud to the events of 1910, when he first led an expedition against Ibn Saᶜud. According to him, 'this action was the root cause of [Ibn Saᶜud's] ill-will' (Arab Bulletin No. 75, 1918). At the start of the Arab Revolt, however, Abdullah observed that as 'a very ambitious man,' Ibn Saᶜud desired to challenge Husayn's growing power and thus 'planned to increase his power by a Wahhabi revival on the old and original lines' (Cornwallis, 1917). Just like his younger brother, Abdullah linked ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz's recent activities to augment his power to a religious 'revival.'

To position Ibn Saᶜud as a leader of a revivalist movement, Faysal and Abdullah extended their father's previous comparison between Ibn Saᶜud and the Idrīsīds by more explicitly describing Wahhabism as outside 'orthodox' Islam. Referring to Ibn Saud as the 'imam' of Wahhabism, both *Sharīfians* alleged how Ibn Saᶜud was the apex of this separate movement by providing salaries to Wahhabi preachers who spread the Wahhabi doctrine among the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula. As such, they described how the Wahhabis had a separate and distinct ᶜ*ulama*' trained by a separate college for them in Riyadh and funded by Ibn Saᶜud (Arab Bulletin No. 74, 1917; Al-Rasheed, 2002, pp. 46–58; Cornwallis, 1917).[8] Faysal went even further in his characterization of Wahhabism when he explicitly referred to Ibn Saᶜud as the head of the Wahhabi 'tarika' (*ṭarīqa*), and that his tribal forces, the *Ikhwān*, 'submit themselves wholly to his orders.' (Arab Bulletin No. 74, 1917; Arab Bulletin No. 75, 1918).[9] By associating Wahhabism as a *ṭarīqa*, Faysal suggested that Wahhabism represented a type of Islamic revivalism, perhaps even a form of Sufism. This association with echoed strands of Islamic reformers who believed Sufism was antithetical to modern Islamic civilisation for inserting heretical practices and teachings that corrupted Islamic societies with irrational superstitions and excessive emotionalism (Hourani, 1983).

In line with the late Ottoman discourses that associated modernity with settled peoples and treated nomadic populations as antithetical to civilisation, Husayn's sons suggested that Wahhabism only appealed to the bedouin populations of the Peninsula whom they characterised as prone to violence and extremism (Al-Rasheed, 2002, pp. 18–22; Al-Fahad, 2003).[10] Abdullah, for instance, explained that bedouin tribesmen first embraced Wahhabism after entering Ibn Saᶜud's territory for dates but then were gifted rifles, money, and property in exchange for professing the new doctrine (Arab Bulletin No. 76, 1918). Accordingly, Abdullah alleged that Wahhabism only appealed to their relative ignorance and fanaticism: 'their [Wahhabi] methods were slow and insidious, and the rigour of their tenets appealed to the fanaticism which was latent amongst ignorant Bedu' (Arab Bulletin No. 76, 1918). Faysal confirmed his brother's observation, explaining to Lawrence that Wahhabism 'appeal only to Bedu,' and in so doing, the Ikhwan 'sow discord between them and the hadhar [*ḥāḍr*, i.e. 'settled populations']' Faysal predicted that once Central Arabia fell under his power, Ibn Saᶜud 'will direct the force of the Bedu in turn against the settled peoples of Arabia: taking piecemeal, first Qasim [where

Abdullah was encamped], then Hail, then the Hejaz, then Iraq and Syria, he will impose everywhere the new doctrine, and sway the peninsula' (Arab Bulletin No. 74, 1917). At the centre of their claim was that Wahhabi strength depended on the Bedouin populations whom it naturally exploited for their relative lack of civilisation to the benefit of Ibn Saᶜud and his supporters. In that way, the Hashemites depicted Wahhabism and Ibn Saᶜud represented threats to modern Islamic civilisation by settled populations.

Neither Abdullah nor Faysal provided a detailed description of Wahhabi religious doctrine or theology. Nevertheless, during his interview with Lawrence, Faysal characterised its practices and beliefs as extreme. Associating Wahhabism with only the actions of the *Ikhwan*, tribal fighters for Ibn Saᶜud, Faysal described how

> The Akhwan take over all the Senefiyeh[11] [sic] tenets, especially the saying that Muhammad was a man with a message, who is dead. They add stricter rules of consanguinity, veil their women even in the houses, are fatalists to a forbidden degree, and hold as first principle the law of Jihad, at the call of the Imam and the Ulema. I fear always that to-morrow, when the stress comes, they will reject the authority of the Koran (in the interpretation of which they differ greatly from us), as they reject the Prophet to-day (Arab Bulletin No. 74, 1917).

In line with this claim, Faysal ended his interview suggesting that if Wahhabism spreads, its followers would even destroy the holy sites in Mecca and Medina (Arab Bulletin No. 74, 1917). This characterization served a double purpose for the Hashimite rhetorical conflict with Ibn Saᶜud. First, by purportedly listing the ways in which Wahhabism represented an extreme form of Islam characteristic of a pre-modern time, Faysal portrayed Ibn Saᶜud as an agent of anti-modernity. Second, by suggesting that Wahhabis rejected the essential, defining elements of Islam like the sacredness of the Quran, the uniqueness of the prophethood of Muhammad, and the ultimate sanctity of the holy cities as destinations for the prescribed yearly pilgrimages, Faysal further situated Wahhabism and Ibn Saᶜud outside 'moderate' orthodox Islam.

Having thus alleged that Ibn Saᶜud was at the centre of an extreme, revivalist, and heretical form of Islam, Abdullah and Faysal depicted the Hashimite rivalry with Ibn Saᶜud as a civilisational conflict between Wahhabi extremism and their father's moderation. During their interviews, Abdullah and Faysal informed their British interviewers that their father's success would solve the threat to modern Islamic civilisation by acting as a civilising force. Fayal, for example, explained that the Hashimite form of Islam–moderate, tolerant, and 'civilised'–better reflected 'the spirit of the time,' that is, modernity whether its European or Islamic form. Faysal insisted first that 'if we can unite the settled peoples of Arabia under my Father's flag, we can strangle the new faith in the desert, until it becomes again a dogmatic abstraction….' (Arab Bulletin No. 74, 1917) For the Bedouin of the Arabian Peninsula, he continued, 'the savagery of the *sheria* code, literal with al-Saud, is softened by the humanity of the ruler to accord with the spirit of the time,' that is, Sharif Husayn, his father (Arab Bulletin No. 74, 1917). Through historical interactions with the Hashimites, he went so far as to suggest that impressionable Bedouins 'learnt tolerance and the use of tobacco' (Arab Bulletin No. 74, 1917).

Abdullah was less philosophical than his brother when proposing solutions to the Wahhabi threat to civilisation. In line with theories of modernity and civilisation that associated nomadic groups with anti-civilisation, Abdullah contrasted that his father's movement was primarily a movement of settled Arabs united by the Revolt. Wahhabism, by appealing to nomadic tribes, ultimately threatened these settled populations. The obvious solution according to Abdullah to ensure that 'peace and unity would be attained in Arabia' were all the tribal chieftains to 'recognize the suzerainty of the King of the Arabs,' that is, his father Husayn, and for the British to encourage their Arab allies to do so (Cornwallis, 1917). Otherwise, Abdullah warned, that 'all our efforts and victories over the Turks will be wasted,' and that, 'Great Britain will not profit by the Arab revival' (Antonius, 1938).[12] Against this existential threat to the Arab movement led by their father, Abdullah further warned that 'if al-Saud could not be restrained with [British] help, the King [*Sharīf* Husayn] and he would be bound eventually to take such steps as were necessary' (Arab Bulletin No. 76, 1918; Wilson, 1917). An amicable solution (suggesting that his youngest brother, Zayd, marry into the Saᶜudi family) was possible, but unless the British intervened, he further warned that 'there was only one way to treat such gentry, and that was to kill them,' since they threatened the very 'religious foundations' of the Hashimite state (Arab Bulletin No. 76, 1918; Wilson, 1917).

The limits of the Anti-Wahhabi Hashimite rhetorical strategy

Regardless of Hashimite efforts to discredit Ibn Saᶜud by associating Wahhabism in opposition with Islamic civilisation and orthodox forms of Islam, in retrospect their rhetorical strategy proved ineffective both in the late Ottoman period and with their British allies. After Husayn's letter to his brother in 1913, the CUP government concluded a pact with the Idrīsīds after the Ottoman-Italian War, though it did not seem to come into effect (Bang, 1996). By May 1914, the Ottoman government then signed a 'secret' agreement with Ibn Saᶜud that recognized him as the 'walī' of the Najd in exchange for his recognition of Ottoman sovereignty (Goldberg, 1984). By 1915, however, Ibn Saᶜud concluded the Treaty of Darin with Great Britain in much the same way as he had done with the Ottomans. In this treaty, Ibn Saᶜud committed to not attack any British protectorates in the Persian Gulf in exchange for recognition of his sovereignty, a financial stipend, and arms. Ibn Saᶜud promised to ally against the Ottomans (Goldberg, 1984). Even amidst the al-Khurma conflict that threatened their Hashimite allies, the British Foreign Office sent Harry St. John Philby from the India Office to Riyadh in 1917–1918 in order to meet with Ibn Saᶜud. His visit was a sort of watershed moment for Saᶜudi political ambitions by assuaging any fears that the

British supported Hashimite ambitions to the entire region (Kostiner, 1993, pp. 19–20). Looking ahead, when tensions in al-Khurma increased into the winter and spring of 1919–the war against the Ottomans officially over–the British remained neutral in the rivalry between their Arab allies. The al-Khurma crisis eventually precipitated into the Battle of Turaba between Hashimite and Saudi forces in May 1919. Saᶜudi victory confirmed their ascendency in the Arabian Peninsula that eventually led to Ibn Saᶜud's conquest of Mecca and the entire Hijaz in 1925, thereby ending Hashimite power there.

Scholars account for the eclipse of the Hashimites and the rise of Ibn Saᶜud in the Arabian Peninsula because of many factors. As part of Sultan Abdul Hamid's policy of incorporating Arab elites into his administration and to counter British aims in the Gulf, he briefly sought a friendly relationship with the Saᶜudis. That strategy proved unworkable once Abdul Aziz Ibn Saᶜud continued to expand at the expense of Ottoman allies beginning in 1902 (Karpat, 2001, p. 27). As mentioned earlier, however, during the rule of the CUP, they pursued a policy of formalising agreements with 'tribal' powers in the Arabian Peninsula in order to secure borders–against the wishes of the Hashimites who considered such agreements at constraining their power and authority in the region (Daḥlān, 1978, p. 19). Later, the conflicting promises made to Husayn by the British, the increased suspicion of Husayn's deference to European powers, and the supposed incompatibility of Husayn's political program with the largely tribal, non-urban, inhabitants of the Hijaz have also been considered possible limits to Hashimite appeal leaders of the 'Arab' movement (Alangari, 1998; Ochsenwald, 1991).

This paper concludes with an observation: considering how the Hashimites framed this rivalry along civilisational lines, using ideas they inherited from the Hamidian period that emphasised urbanity, progress, and moderation–values also shared by their European and Arabist allies–their arguments against Wahhabism and by extension Ibn Saᶜud was entirely ineffective. This final section seeks to provide a possible explanation to the limits of that rhetorical strategy. While operational power through tribal allies and diplomatic priorities were key to deciphering the political trajectories of both the Hashimites and Ibn Saᶜud, the broader ideological landscape–Ottoman, Arabist, and British–on the role of tribesmen in Islamic civilisation was also relevant to determine the impact, or weakness, of the Hashimite strategy. In that, the Hashimites never addressed an alternative discourse, present among Ottoman and British thinkers, that lauded tribesmen as a source of political and religious rejuvenation that challenged the Hashimite portrayal of tribesmen as backward, fanatical, and ultimately anti-modern.

Underpinning this admiration of tribalism as key to Islamic civilisation was a framework inherited from a mediaeval Arab philosopher, Ibn Khaldun (1336–1406) and his magnum opus, *al-Muqaddimah*. In it, he outlined the emergence, development, and decline of states in world history based on the foundational role of *ᶜasabiyya* (often translated as 'group solidarity'). His ideas, which had experienced a renewed interest among Ottoman and Arabist thinkers in the 19th century, outlined a cycle of growth and decay based on changes to the society's relative *ᶜasabiyya* (Fleischer, 1986).[13] Tribesmen, whose group solidarity were particularly strong if not the strongest among human societies, often were the force that led to political and civilisational rejuvenation after a period of decline or decadence of urban societies.

For Wahhabism and its role among the tribesmen in the Arabian Peninsula to be considered such a Khaldunian force, a more moderate position towards Wahhabism had to emerge among Ottoman writers. That shift from the anti-Wahhabi attitudes examined by Daḥlān whose writings portrayed Wahhabism as a threat to urban, i.e. civilised, societies, seemed to have taken place during the CUP period. For example, Husayn Husni bin Mustafa, an Ottoman military officer who served in Basra, published an account of his travels to Central Arabia in 1912. He described the geographical and human characteristics of the region including an analysis of Wahhabism. Regarding Wahhabism, he was notably gentler than Daḥlān's account. He described Wahhabism as its own madhab by emphasising some theological differences (like its condemnation of both visiting shrines and seeking intercessions from holy figures) and that its adherents believe that its founder was a '*mujaddid* of religion' (Ḥasni, 2003, p. 48). The bulk of his analysis, however, emphasised the similarities between Wahhabism and the rest of Sunnism by outlining commonalities in theology and doctrine (Ḥasni, 2003, pp. 42–43). To emphasise these doctrinal similarities, he repeatedly distinguished Wahhabism from Shi'ism (Ḥasni, 2003, pp. 44–53). Finally, unlike Daḥlān's narrative that credited Wahhabism's spread to its appeal among tribesmen, Husni recognized that Wahhabism was present among both the Bedouin and the 'ḥāḍr,' i.e. the settled communities (Ḥasni, 2003, p. 36). Related, while he admired the tribes' efficacy at siege warfare, he avoided associating them

with barbarity or incivility. Instead, he described how the Bedouin lifestyle facilitated tyranny and violence, but there were mechanisms in place that tempered abuse. For instance, when describing the application of justice, he noted the presence of 'jabrī' courts which depended on force but also noted the use of Sharia courts that operated in accord with standard Islamic practices (Ḥasni, 2003, pp. 59–60).

This discursive shift towards a moderate position vis-a-vis Wahhabism corresponded with the change in state policy towards Ibn Saᶜud and other such movements by the CUP government. Motivating this change in policies had been the recent Ottoman experience in Libya with the religious revivalist movement, the *Sanusiyyah*. Originating in the mid-19th century, the *Sunusiyyah* referred to a religious order founded by Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Sanusi who had established networks of followers throughout North Africa and even the Arabian Peninsula in the Hijaz. He and his descendents claimed to be al-Mahdī (or 'redeemer') and enmeshed their movement among the Bedouin tribesmen, particularly in Libya. Ottoman authorities initially looked at them suspiciously, since they seemed to have situated themselves outside the Ottoman Caliphal order. Mostafa Minawi has shown, however, that even during the Hamidian period, the Ottoman administration and the Sanusi order 'were ideologically synchronistic' and that 'work on the ground was complementary, cooperative, and at times even synergetic' with the government's aims to modernise the tribesmen and to resist European encroachment such as during the Italian-Ottoman war in 1911–1912 (Anderson, 1984; Deringil, 2003; Minawi, 2016). Selim Deringil in his work on Ottoman ideology and legitimacy even made the passing remark that 'the main reason why the Ottomans wooed the Senusi sheikhs…was that they, "reformed the character (*tehzib-i ahlak*)" of the Bedouin and, "abated their savagery (*izale-i vahset*)"' (Deringil, 2011, pp. 41-42). Although Libya was lost to the Italians in 1912, this experience demonstrated how a religious movement that catalysed tribesmen could be harnessed to serve the state interests against European machinations to preserve the Ottoman state.

These ideas of regeneration by Arab tribesmen also resonated with Arabist thinkers, many of whom had initially supported Husayn's bid for independence against the Ottomans as a *cause célèbre* for the renewal of Arab civilisation by using such labels as '*Nahḍa*' to describe it (Hourani, 1981, 1983; Schaebler, 2004).[14] For instance, we can detect the Khaldunian framework and its impact on Hashimite supporters in the writings of such Arabists like al-Kawakibi and Rashid Rida, authors who considered the Arab tribes as rejuvenators of Islamic civilisation. In his seminal work *Umm al-Qura*, al-Kawakibi described an apocryphal conference of religious leaders in Mecca that gathered to discuss how to revive the Islamic world. In it, he made the delegate from Mecca serve as the president of the conference, but the representative of the Najd was recognized as representing purified Islam that fought against innovations (Schaebler, 2004, p. 182). Although not mentioning Wahhabism, the 'minutes' of the conference concluded with twenty-six reasons as to why the conference attendees' 'hopes' for a 'revival of religion' were connected to the Bedouin Arab of the Arabian Peninsula ('*al-jazira*'). They affirmed the Bedouin's role by noting their special association with Islam's holiest sites, their faithfulness and knowledge of Islam, and the strength of their '*ᶜaṣabiyya*' (Kawākibī, 1931, pp. 193-194; Schulze, 2002).[15] Rashid Rida, an early supporter of Husayn's Revolt and perhaps one of his most notable Arabist supporters, was credited for spreading al-Kawakibi's ideas by publishing *Umm al-Qura* in serial form in his Cairene periodical, *al-Manar*.In his own writings, he depicted the tribesmen as undefiled in their practices and representing the virtues that had made them the initial recipients of the Quran (Schaebler, 2004). He attempted to actualise this vision of using the power of the Arabian Peninsula to restore Islamic civilisation. Before the outbreak of World War I, he made contact with key leaders of the Peninsular Arabs (including Ibn Saᶜud, Imam Yahya in Yemen, Shaykh Mubarak in Kuwait, and Shaykh Haz'al of Muscat, and the Hashimites) supposedly encouraging them to cooperate in common cause for Arab interests (Zisser, 2011).[16] Ultimately, after his political break with the Hashimites over their capitulations with European claims in the post-Ottoman Middle East, Rida 'rehabilitated' Wahhabism by legitimating it within the broader Sunni Muslim world as part of his shift in publicly advocating for Ibn Saᶜud as a the true champion of Arabist goals (Commins, 2009b; Commins, 2015; Lauzière, 2016).

Among European Orientalist writers in the 19th century, some also considered Wahhabism to be a moderating force for Bedouin tribes that would benefit Islamic civilisation more broadly. In his 1831 *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahábys,* the Swiss explorer John Lewis Burckhardt wrote that 'the doctrines of Abd el Waháb were not those of a new religion; his efforts were directed only to reform abuses in the followers of Islám, and to disseminate the pure faith about Bedouins; who, although nominally

Muselmáns, were equally ignorant of religion…' (Burckhardt, 1831, p. 99) Interestingly, he credit any misunderstandings of Wahhabi doctrine to the Sharifs of Mecca, that is the Hashimites, 'who had always been a determined enemy of growing Waháby power…[and] had an interest in widening the breach between the new sectaries and the Turkish Empire,' the Ottomans (Burckhardt, 1831, p. 100). For Burckhardt, then, Wahhabism was not an errant doctrine but was a civilising, reforming force for both tribesmen and Islamic civilisation generally.

Later, the English poet and writer Wilfrid Blunt, whose journeys to the Middle East inspired his 1882 book *The Future of Islam* echoed this celebration and elevation of the Arab tribes through Wahhabism. Blunt was a particularly emblematic figure because his advocacy for the creation of an Arab caliphate became the basis of later British opinion and may have inspired some early Arabist authors (Haim, 1962, pp. 27–29; Kedourie, 1972; Khalidi, 1991, pp. 69–70; Weismann, 2015, pp. 4–5).[17] Blunt looked specifically to the nomadic populations in the Hijaz as a remnant of early Muslim society whom he celebrated as 'a pure race of a peculiarly noble type, and unchanged in any essential feature of their life from what they were in the days of Mohammed,' and who were 'proud of their independence, and tenacious of their rights' (Blunt, 1882, pp. 101–102). Blunt advocated for the Hashimites to succeed the Ottoman caliphate. He based his opinion on the fact that they were descendants of Quraysh, but also by wrongly describing them as still 'a distinct nomadic tribe' (Blunt, 1882, p. 103). This mischaracterization of the Hashimites demonstrated how this influential author in fact celebrated the nomads rather than criticising them as backwards or uncivilised. Specific to Wahhabism, he credited Wahhabism for the 'awakening of religious feeling' that was necessary for the Arabs to reclaim the Caliphate (Blunt, 1882, p. 74). For the Islamic world more broadly, Blunt predicted that Wahhabi 'Puritanism…after a transient burst of energy, which would rouse the thought of Islam and renew her spiritual life,' would ultimately result in 'a humaner spirit, as in Arabia would take its place, and lead to a more lasting, because a more rational, reform' (Blunt, 1882, p. 153). Thus, far from a source of de-civilisation, the Arabs tribes coupled with an appropriate catalyst like Wahhabism could culminate into the modernising reform that Islam desperately needed.

During and after Husayn's revolt, British opinion was not uniform in their understanding of the nature or role of Wahhabism. In both the formation of the Mandates of Transjordan and Iraq, Wahhabi tribes encroaching and invading these territories from Central Arabia were considered a threat and a nuisance. There was, nevertheless, a consensus by the British officials in these areas that tribes were nevertheless an integral part of Arab society and had to be courted and integrated into the administration of these newly established countries (Alon, 2005, 2007; Dodge, 2003). Contrary to the stated ideas of the Hashimites that saw the tribesmen, particularly the nomads, as antithetical to modern Islamic civilisation, it has been shown that among British colonial administrators, they had a deep, 'psychological' affinity for them over urban Arab populations. This preference may have been rooted in their perceived cultural values, like chivalry, patriarchy, and tradition, but also a deep suspicion for citied, cosmopolitan societies (Tidrick, 1990). Inasmuch as the Hashimites attempted to portray themselves as agents of urban, settled peoples with concomitant modern values to British officials during the war years, the appeal of both Faysal and Abdullah to manage Iraq and Transjordan respectively as part of the British 'Sharifian Policy' rested on managing tribes.

Conclusion

When accounting for the actions of the Hashimites against the Saᶜudis during the late Ottoman period and into their Revolt, scholars have folded them into a complex set of outside political forces (whether provincial politics, Ottoman centralization, and British colonialism) that overlooked how the intellectual climate and discourses of the period had shaped their worldview. Exposed to the political culture during the Hamidian period, the Hashimites associated modern Islamic civilisation with urban society and with the normative Ottoman religious practices that characterised the modernising project of the period. In this way, they were intellectual actors who depicted their rivalry with Ibn Saᶜud as one against modernity and civilisation, which they claimed to champion, against the forces of anti-civilisation that they associated with Wahhabi Islam. To make this association, the Hashimites depicted Wahhabism as a revivalist movement (with Ibn Saᶜud as its spiritual leader) that appealed only to a supposedly fanatical Bedouin that threatened moderate, settled society–that is, 'civilisation.' The Hashimites promoted this version of modernity because it had served them well in the Hamidian period and then resonated with their early

supporters during the Revolt, Arabist and European alike, who were concerned with fanaticism and extremism. Despite how compatible Hashimite notions of civilisation and modernity were to their supporters, they nevertheless failed to dissuade British and Arab Islamist figures from supporting Ibn Saᶜud. Looking beyond political machinations, this rhetorical front represented another dimension in which to the diminished backing for Husayn and the persistent support of Ibn Saᶜud. While Husayn and his sons insisted that they represented Islamic modernity because of their religious moderation and support from settled societies, Ottoman, Arabist, and European also espoused a view of civilisation whereby Arabian tribes and even Wahhabism could serve as a modernising force of Islamic civilisation. By offering an alternative view of modernity, they weakened Hashimite claims that they were the exclusive modernizers of Islamic civilisation in the Arab Muslim world and provided a compelling defence of Ibn Saᶜud's leadership.

Notes

1. He suggested that one possible reason for the limited support for the Revolt by Arab Ottoman officials was because they were not members of this last generation.
2. This use of 'conservative' and 'liberal' distinctions of modernity among Arabist authors was adopted from Ilham Khuri-Makdisi's categorizations.
3. Ayyūb Ṣabrī Pasha authored works on this topic includes (*Taʾrīk̲ h̲ -i Wahhābiyyān* [History of the Wahhabis], Istanbul 1296/1878) and *Mirʾāt al-Ḥaramayn* [Views of the Two Holy Cities], 3 vols., Istanbul 1301-6/1883-1888).
4. For a short history of *fitna* in early Islamic history.
5. For a look at how the Ottomans leveraged tribes as a centralization measure see, Eugene L. Rogan 1999. For a closer examination of this process among the Idrīsīds, see Anne K Bang.
6. Ibn Saᶜud and other adherents of Wahhabism, would have resisted such a claim and even rejected the label 'Wahhabi' since it seemed to associate them with a specific preacher. Their preachers indeed condemned the Ottoman government and other religious groups for transgressing both right belief and proper practice of Islam, but Ibn Saᶜud and other key Wahhabi leaders did not explicitly reject the Ottoman Sultan's claims to the Caliphate. See Crawford 2014.
7. There is a rich academic debate on how to characterise Wahhabism as revivalist, reforming, etc.
8. By ᶜulama, Abdullah was likely referencing the *muṭawwaᶜa*, religious specialists.
9. Sharif Abdullah also called al-Saᶜud 'the old Imam Abdurrahman'.
10. From its origins, Wahhabism support rested on the settled populations of Central Arabia, the *ḥaḍar*. See Al Rasheed. Al-Fahad described the Saᶜudi State as a 'Hadari project' that sought to pacify the Bedouin.
11. 'Senefiyah' was likely a mis-print in the English translation, which are the only versions of these interviews that exist. What was likely compared was '*salafiyyah*' in reference to the religious movement to return Islam to the shape of the original generation of Muhammad, the *salaf*.
12. The label, *al-Nahḍa*, referred to the Arab revival that was used frequently in the Hashimite revolutionary newspaper, Al-*Qibla*.
13. Significantly, ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* was printed for the first time in Cairo in 1858, indicating a renewed interest in the philosopher's ideas. For an examination of the wide engagement with Ibn Khaldun's ideas, see Cornell Fleischer.
14. In his analysis of Arab liberal thought in the 19th century, Hourani showed the breadth and application of ibn Khaldun's among various Arabist thinkers. See Albert Hourani. He likewise showed how Sharīf Husayn seemed to resemble a Khuldunian regenerative force on the basis of his efforts to marshall the tribesmen in the Hijaz to fight in the Arab Revolt. For a most insightful chapter on the inclusion of the Arab tribes into the Arabist discourse in which this section is based, see Birgit Schaebler.
15. Al-Kawakibi never used the term 'Wahhabi,' but it is notable that he elevated Najdi ulama, which were, according to Schaebler, derided by urban scholars. Reinhard Shulze, argued that al-Kawakibi's depiction of the delegate from the Najd and of the Arabs of the Peninsula 'deliberately placed' these figures in the Wahhabi tradition. See Reinhard Schulze.
16. Husayn's son of Abdullah, it should be noted, even joined his Arabist party in Cairo, *'Jamᶜiyaat al-Jamiᶜa al-ᶜArabiyya'* ('Society of the Arab Association').
17. For robust critiques that show how the influential ideas of al-Kawakibi were rooted in a tradition of Islamic reform, see Rashid Khalidi.

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